

XMAS

by Arthur W. Pink

"Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen...for the CUSTOMS of the people are vain" (Jer. 10:1-3).

Christmas is coming! Quite so: but what is "Christmas?" Does not the very term itself denote its source - "Christ - mass." Thus it is of Roman origin, brought over from paganism. But, says someone, Christmas is the time when we commemorate the Savior's birth. It is? And WHO authorized such commemoration? Certainly God did not. The Redeemer bade His disciples "remember" Him in His death, but there is not a word in scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, which tells us to celebrate His birth. Moreover, who knows when, in what month, He was born? The Bible is silent thereon. It is without reason that the only "birthday" commemorations mentioned in God's Word are Pharaoh's (Gen. 40:20) and Herod's (Matt. 14:6)? Is this recorded "for our learning?" If so, have we prayerfully taken it to heart?

And WHO is it that celebrates "Christmas?" The whole "civilized world." Millions who make no profession of faith in the blood of the Lamb, who "despise and reject Him," and millions more who while claiming to be His followers yet in works deny Him, join in merrymaking under the pretense of honoring the birth of the Lord Jesus. Putting it on its lowest ground, we would ask, is it fitting that His friends should unite with His enemies in a worldly round of fleshly gratification? Does any true born again soul really think that He whom the world cast out is either pleased or glorified by such participation in the world's joys? Verily, the customs of the people are VAIN; and it is written, *"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil"* (Ex. 23:2).

Some will argue for the "keeping of Christmas" on the ground of "giving the kiddies a good time." But why do this under the cloak of honoring the Savior's birth? Why is it necessary to drag in His holy name in connection with what takes place at that season of carnal jollification? Is this taking the little one with you OUT of Egypt (Ex. 10:9-10) a type of the world, or is it not plainly a mingling with the present day Egyptians in their "pleasures of sin for a season?" (Heb. 11:25) Scripture says, *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"* (Prov. 22:6). Scripture does command God's people to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), but where does it stipulate that it is our duty to give the little one a "good time?" Do we ever give the children "a good time" when we engage in anything upon which we cannot fittingly ask THE LORD'S blessing?

There are those who DO abstain from some of the grosser carnalities of the "festive season," yet are they nevertheless in cruel bondage to the prevailing custom of "Christmas" namely that of exchanging "gifts." We say "exchanging" for that is what it really amounts to in many cases. A list is kept, either on paper or in memory, of those from whom gifts were received last year, and that for the purpose of returning the compliment this year. Nor is this all: great care has been taken that the "gift" made to the friend is worth as much in dollars and cents as the one they expect to receive from him or her. Thus, with many who can ill afford it, a considerable sum has to be set aside each year with

which to purchase things simply to send them out in RETURN for others which are likely to be received. Thus a burden has been bound on them which not a few find hard to bear.

But what are we to do? If we fail to send out "gifts" our friends will think hard of us, probably deem us stingy and miserly. The honest course is to go to the trouble of notifying them - by letter if at a distance - that from now on you do not propose to send out any more "Christmas gifts" as such. Give your reasons. State plainly that you have been brought to see that "Christmas merrymaking" is entirely a thing OF THE WORLD, devoid of any Scriptural warrant; that it is a Romish institution, and now that you see this, you dare no longer have any fellowship with it (Eph. 5:11); that you are the Lord's "free man" (1 Cor. 7:22), and therefore you refuse to be in bondage to a costly custom imposed by the world.

What about sending out "Christmas cards" with a text of Scripture on them? That also is an abomination in the sight of God. Why? Because His Word expressly forbids all unholy mixtures; Deut. 22:10-11 typified this. What do we mean by an "unholy mixture?" This: the linking together of the pure Word of God with the Romish "Christ-MASS." By all means send cards (preferably at some other time of the year) to your ungodly friends, and Christians too, with a verse of Scripture, but NOT with "Christmas" on it. What would you think of a printed program of a vaudeville having Isa. 53:5 at the foot of it? Why, that it was altogether OUT OF PLACE, highly incongruous. But in the sight of God the circus and the theater are far less obnoxious than the "Christmas celebration" of Romish and Protestant "churches." Why? Because the latter are done under the cover of the holy name of Christ; the former are not.

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). Where there is a heart that really desires to please the Lord, He graciously grants increasing knowledge of His will. If He is pleased to use these lines in opening the eyes of some of His dear people to recognize what is a growing evil, and to show them that they have been dishonoring Christ by linking the name of the Man of Sorrows (and such He WAS, when on earth) with a "MERRY Christmas," then join with the writer in a repentant confessing of this sin to God, seeking His grace for complete deliverance from it, and praise Him for the light which He has granted you concerning it.

Beloved fellow-Christian, *"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh"* (Jas. 5:8). Do we really believe this? Believe it not because the Papacy is regaining its lost temporal power, but because GOD says so - *"for we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Cor. 5:7). If so, what effects does such believing have on our walk? This may be your last Christmas on earth. During it the Lord may descend from heaven with a shout to gather His own to Himself. Would you like to be summoned from a "Christmas party" to meet Him in the air? The call for the moment is *"Go ye OUT to meet Him"* (Matt. 25:6) out from a Godless Christendom, out from the horrible burlesque of "religion" which now masquerades under His name.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). How solemn and searching! The Lord Jesus declared that *"every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment"* (Matt. 12:36). If every "idle word" is going to be taken note of, then most assuredly will be every wasted energy, every wasted dollar, every wasted hour! Should we still be on earth when the closing days of this year arrive, let us write and reader earnestly seek grace to live and act with the judgment seat of Christ before us. HIS "well done" will

be ample compensation for the sneers and taunts which we may now receive from Christless souls.

Does any Christian reader imagine for a moment that when he or she shall stand before their holy Lord, that they will regret having lived "too strictly" on earth? Is there the slightest danger of His reproving any of His own because they were "too extreme" in "*abstaining from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*" (1 Peter 2:11)? We may gain the good will and good works of worldly religionists today by our compromising on "little (?) points," but shall we receive His smile and approval on that day? Oh to be more concerned about what HE thinks, and less concerned about what perishing mortals think.

"*Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*" (Ex. 23:2). Ah, it is an easy thing to float with the tide of popular opinion; but it takes much grace, diligently sought from God, to swim against it. Yet that is what the heir of heaven is called on to do: to "*Be not conformed to this world*" (Rom. 12:2), to deny self, take up the cross, and follow a rejected Christ. How sorely does both writer and reader need to heed that word of the savior, "*Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown*" (Rev. 3:11). Oh that each of us may be able to truthfully say, "*I have refrained my feet from EVERY evil way, that I might keep THY WORD*" (Psa. 119:101).

Our final word is to the pastors. To you the Word of the Lord is, "*Be THOU AN EXAMPLE of believers in word, in deportment, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity*" (1 Tim. 4:12). Is it not true that the most corrupt "churches" you know of, where almost every fundamental of the faith is denied, will have their "Christmas celebrations?" Will you imitate them? Are you consistent to protest against unscriptural methods of "raising money," and then to sanction unscriptural "Christmas services?" Seek grace to firmly but lovingly set God's truth on this subject before your people, and announce that you can have no part in following Pagan, Romish, and worldly customs.

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